

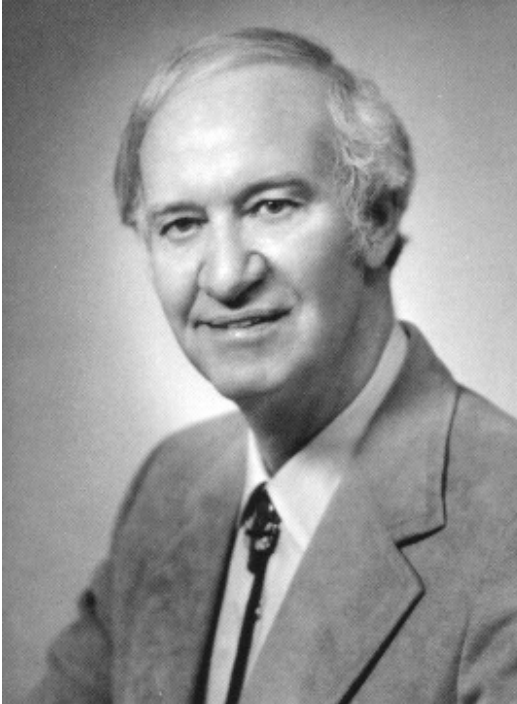
“Andragogy or Pedagogy for Incarcerated Learners?”

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Malcolm Shepherd Knowles



American practitioner and theorist of adult education, who defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn" (1980.) It prescribes to approaches to learning that are problem-based, purposeful, and collaborative rather than didactic.

"To adults, education is a process of improving their ability to cope with life problems they face now."

Andragogy and Our Students

“People become ready to learn something when they experience a need to learn it in order to cope more satisfyingly with real life tasks or problems. The educator has the responsibility to create conditions and provide tools and procedures for helping learners discover their 'need to know.'” Malcolm S. Knowles (1980)

“Wherever socially immature students are educated, the traditional distinction between children and adults becomes blurred. Educators are concerned about whether they should focus on learners' immature skills, or on their “grown up” bodies and often intense life experiences.” Thom Gehring (2000)

Who are your students with learning disabilities?

“As a judge, I was continually confronted with offenders whose behavior was unexpected and surprising. This was observed not only during their criminal activity but during their travel through the criminal process. This behavior did not appear to be intentional, but rather an inappropriate response to the circumstances that existed at the time. Furthermore, this behavior reminded me of the behavior of my two children who had been diagnosed with learning disabilities (LD) and attention deficit disorder (ADD).” Judge David S. Admire, Chairman, Criminal Justice Department, Bethany College (2006)

Who are your students with learning disabilities?

Academic difficulties result in issues such as:

- Reading and filling out job applications
- Reading want ads and discerning employers' needs
- Following street signs and addresses
- Handling money

And as Judge Admire and others witness:

- Difficulty following verbal directions from police/probation officers
- Reading and responding to written directives
- Retaining employment

Six Principles of All Adult Learners

1. Internally motivated and self-directed.
2. Bring to learning previous experience/knowledge.
3. Purpose driven and goal oriented.
4. Relevancy oriented with a need to know.
5. Problem centered, seeking immediate applicability.
6. Wishes to be respected as an adult.

And humor goes a long way!



1. Motivation and Self-direction

Adult learners:

- Have various incentives: a wish to achieve position in life, curiosity, satisfaction of accomplishment.
- Seek knowledge that will improve skills that they value.
- Need to be involved in the planning and the evaluation of their instruction.
- Want to see the course ahead.



2. Life Experiences and Knowledge

Adults learners:

- Have prior experiences that determine a fondness or a dislike for the classroom environment.
- Have acquired valuable information that they wish to share and compare.
- Apply prior experiences to their new learning experiences.
- Wish to be validated.



3. Purpose Driven, Goal Oriented

Adult learners:

- Need to be instrumental in creating their own goals.
- Want to have control over their learning.
- Establish (with your help) steps that get them closer to a defined goal.
- Adult students “experience a need to learn in order to cope more satisfyingly with real-life tasks or problems” (Knowles, 1980)

got purpose?

4. Relevancy Oriented

Adult learners:

- Seek relevance between the learning topic and life.
- Make connections to their goals.
- Need explanations for the things that they are asked to learn.
- Appreciate feedback that is relevant and immediate.



5. Problem Centered

Adult learners:

- Discover things and knowledge for themselves.
- Seek information that can be immediately applicable to their needs.
- Enjoy collaborating with others for a common goal.
- Appreciate guidance and help.



6. Respected as an Adult Learner

Adult learners:

- Enjoy opportunities to contribute to meaningful discussions.
- Want the consideration of being an ally to the instructor.
- Want their unique learning styles and preferences acknowledged.
- Are sensitive to tone of voice.



Puzzle of Practice

Share the dilemmas or challenges in your practice.



Group Activity

1. Form into six groups.
2. Each group has a large poster paper, markers, and a 3x5 card
3. Title your paper with the principle on your 3x5 card
4. Consider your “puzzles of practice” and illustrate how applying this principle may lead to improved and more pleasurable learning experiences.
5. Be creative!
6. Each group will share its illustrated vignettes!

Questions?

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